

The Freecycle Network, Inc. v. Tim Oey
U.S. District Court
District of Arizona
06-CV-173-TUC-RCC
Exhibit D to Beal Declaration

washingtonpost.com

Shrink Your Ecological Footprint

By Bridget Bentz Sizer
Special to The Washington Post
Sunday, March 12, 2006; M05

Everybody knows how big his actual footprint is, but until a friend sent me the link to <http://www.ecofoot.org/>, I was blissfully ignorant of the size of my ecological footprint. The Web site, created by the Earth Day Network, surveys users' eating, transportation and housing choices and spits out an estimate of how many planets would be needed to sustain the world if everyone on Earth lived the same lifestyle. The bad news? If everyone in the world lived like me, we would need three planets to sustain us. Even worse, the average American lifestyle would require 5.3 planets.

But it's not all doom and gloom. While downsizing an actual footprint requires amputation, an ecological footprint is much easier to modify. "We all have the power to make changes happen . . . when each of us do it, collectively we have a significant impact on the environment," says Monique Tilford, acting executive director of the Center for the New American Dream, a Takoma Park-based environmental advocacy group. Here are eight ways to start acting locally for a global impact.

JOIN FREECYCLED

Heidi Ridgley, a senior editor for the environmental nonprofit Defenders of Wildlife, wasn't sure what to do with her eco-friendly bug killer after she moved from a roach-infested apartment in Adams Morgan to a pest-free rowhouse in Columbia Heights. So she offered it up on the Freecycle Network. "People crawled out of the woodwork to [claim] it," she jokes.

Started in Tucson in 2003, the Freecycle Network is an international collection of free listservs aimed at reducing landfill waste by making one person's trash another person's treasure.

"I discovered Freecycle while redoing my front porch last summer," Ridgley says. "I had perfectly reusable deck wood that I didn't need anymore, and a neighbor told me Freecycle would ensure it wouldn't get sent to a landfill." With more than 9,300 local members, FreecycleDC (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FreecycleDC>) is a bustle of activity, with members posting regularly to offer unwanted goods. The only hard and fast rule is that all items must be offered for free. In addition to the deck wood and the bug killer, Ridgley has found homes for an unwanted child's scooter, a salad spinner, aquarium dechlorination drops and a thermostat.

GET RID OF JUNK MAIL

The average American receives 41 pounds of junk mail a year, according to the Center for the Development of Recycling. And 44 percent of that winds up in a landfill unopened (for me, the rest clutters up the kitchen table). Though the tide of junk mail may seem overwhelming, Tilford says that it's possible to shut it off. "Companies are required by law to take you off a mailing list if you request

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that," she says. A good place to start is by contacting the Direct Marketing Association to request your name be placed on a "do-not-mail" file. (This request can be made for free via postcard, or for \$5 on DMA's Web site, <http://www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist>) To curb the flow of pre-approved credit card applications, call TransUnion at 888-567-8688.

BE GREEN WHEN YOU CLEAN

Labels on typical household cleaners can be a bit troubling -- with warnings of "irreversible eye damage" and "skin burns." Being clean can sound, well, a little dirty. But fear not. Mindy Pennybacker, the editor of the Green Guide, an environmental and health newsletter, says most of her readers report finding "alternative cleaning products that work just as well as conventional cleaners." In other words, being green and being clean can go hand in hand. To find eco-friendly cleaners, the Green Guide (<http://www.thegreenguide.com/>) recommends reading labels carefully with an eye for specific claims. "Biodegradable in three to five days" is preferable to simply "biodegradable," since most substances will eventually break down, given the right conditions. Also, cleaners that promise "no solvents," "no phosphates" or are "plant-based" offer a better green guarantee than those with a vague "ecologically friendly" stamp on the label.

CHANGE YOUR LIGHT BULBS

Question: How many years does it take an environmentalist to change a light bulb? Answer: Seven, but only if he's using energy-efficient compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. Though slightly more expensive, low-mercury CFL bulbs use less energy and last longer than standard light bulbs. Replace four standard bulbs with the CFL ones, and you'll prevent the emission of 5,000 pounds of carbon dioxide over the life of the bulbs, according to the Center for the New American Dream. The center, which has a "Turn the Tide" campaign (<http://www.newdream.org/ttoffline/actions.php>), also estimates that you'll save \$100 on your energy bill over the same time period. Though consumers complained of the harsh quality of early CFL bulbs, more recent models have softened the light. A 25-watt CFL bulb emits the same amount of light as a standard 100-watt bulb. And these days, CFL bulbs are sold almost everywhere standard light bulbs are sold.

PARK YOUR CAR

When Mimi Ikle-Khalsa's car was stolen last year, the insurance settlement would have paid for a replacement. Instead, Ikle-Khalsa, a massage therapist from Takoma Park, reflected on her use of fossil fuels and decided to go without. She relies on a combination of foot-power and public transportation to get to work in Silver Spring and Bethesda. Aside from the occasional "horrific rain" that crops up during her 1 1/2 -mile trek to the Metro, Ikle-Khalsa has no complaints.

While ditching the car entirely might not be practical for everyone -- according to a 2002 survey by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the average American drives 203 miles each week -- cutting back on needless car trips will shrink your global footprint; each person who eliminates 20 miles of extra driving a week also eliminates nearly 1,000 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions each year, according to the Center for the New American Dream. "Try consolidating shopping trips, so you're not just darting out and buying things," says Pennybacker. "All of these combined efforts can make a difference."

BYO BAG

Comedienne Lily Tomlin tells a story about buying a wastebasket: "The cashier put it in a bag. I brought it home. I took it out of the bag. I crumpled up the bag and tossed it in the wastebasket." The joke works

because of its absurdity -- Tomlin generates trash even as she buys a receptacle for the trash -- but also because it taps into a larger truth; each year Americans use an estimated 100 billion plastic shopping bags. Reusablebags.com, a Web site dedicated to reducing the use of disposable shopping bags, estimates that most plastic shopping bags wind up in landfills, where they take 1,000 years to decompose. So next time you're at the grocery store, consider bagging your goods in reusable canvas bags instead of paper or plastic. If you currently bring home 10 grocery bags each week that's a saving of 520 plastic bags each year.

RECYCLE YOUR CELL PHONE

Arsenic, mercury and lead are the kinds of toxins that lead to emergency phone calls to the poison control hotline, but did you know that they might also be in your old cell phone? The EPA estimates that 700 million cell phones containing 250,000 tons of toxic waste already have been discarded in American landfills. Next time you get a new cell phone, try donating your old one instead of tossing it. The National Zoo has partnered with Eco-Cell, a nonprofit based in Louisville, Ken., to collect visitors' unwanted cell phones, batteries and accessories. Eco-Cell will donate up to \$15 to the Friends of the National Zoo for every working cell phone collected -- working phones will be refurbished and passed on to low-income people, while "dead" phones will be recycled according to EPA guidelines. Not planning a trip to the zoo? Call Eco-Cell at 888-326-3357 or visit their Web site (<http://www.eco-cell.org/>) to learn how to donate a phone.

SKIP THE SCREENSAVER

Contrary to what the name might have you believe, the flying-window screensaver that pops up on your computer monitor when it's not in use is more of an energy waster than a saver. A computer monitor in screensaver mode uses almost as much energy as an active monitor. So ditch the screensaver and instead set your computer to "sleep mode" so that the screen goes blank when not in use. Better yet, turn off your monitor. Smith University estimates that 30 monitors set to sleep mode represent a reduction in emissions and energy consumption equal to taking one car off the road.

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